

Utah Department of Transportation



Specification Writers' Guide

2008 Edition



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State of Utah

Department of Transportation

Specification Writers' Guide

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Introduction and Contacts

This Guide was developed by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), Project Development, Preconstruction, Standards and Specifications Section.

This guide provides instructions for specification writers contributing to the state of Utah's *2008 Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, supplemental specifications, and special provisions. The information included here constitutes the Department's approved guidelines for matters of writing style, word and number usage, and formatting.

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Chapter 1 - Overview

Specification Update

The Department revised its Standard Specifications for the new 2008 Edition. The first purpose of a revision is to consolidate special provisions and supplemental specifications that have been written or revised since publication of the last edition.

A second goal of the new revision is to improve clarity. This was accomplished in part through the use of writing that promotes consistency, clearly, and identifies the roles and responsibilities of all the parties involved in a contract.

Disclaimer

The examples and directions set forth in this guide are the goal of the Department. The 2008 Edition of the Standard Specifications, Supplemental Specifications, and Department Special Provisions are in compliance with this Guide. All other Special Provisions not categorized as Department Special Provisions are required to meet Guide requirements.

For questions not addressed here consult *The Chicago Manual of Style* (requires a subscription for use), the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual*, any specialized sources cited within, or a recent standard dictionary of American English. The Web links to these two manuals can be found from the Standards and Specifications Section's Reference Web page under Specification Writer's Guide References at <http://www.udot.utah.gov/go/standardsreferences>.

All examples cited in this Guide are models for style, usage, and formatting. Do not consider them to be or use them as actual specifications or portions thereof.

Chapter 2 - Organization of Specifications

Hierarchy of Organization

Use the following hierarchy when writing the elements of a specification, whether a standard, a supplemental, or a special provision. Use the least number of subparagraphs needed. The layout of each specification is as follows:

SECTION NUMBER

TITLE

PART (One, Two, and Three)

ARTICLE (For example, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, and 3.2)

Paragraph (For example A, B, C under an article)

Example:

PART 1 GENERAL

1.1	ARTICLE	(First level)
A.	Paragraph	(Second level)
1.	Subparagraph	(Third level)
a.	Subparagraph	(Fourth level)
1)	Subparagraph	(Fifth level)

Basic Elements

Sections:

PART 1 GENERAL

PART 2 PRODUCTS

PART 3 EXECUTION

If a part is not used within a section use the following as an example of the correct usage.

PART 2 PRODUCTS Not used

PART 3 EXECUTION Not used

Part:

New requirements for Part 1 requires the following five standard articles.

1.1 Section Includes

1.2 Related Sections

- 1.3 References
- 1.4 Definitions
- 1.5 Submittals

Refer to Appendix 1 for specification layout and usage if one of the referenced articles is “not used” for that particular Section. All other articles required for a specific Section begin with article 1.6.

Format

Standard Specification:

Section number: Heading 1, Centered, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Title: Heading 2, Centered, Arial, font size 16, bold, upper case.

Part: Heading 3, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Article: Heading 4, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Example: See Appendix 1 for specification layout.

Supplemental Specification:

New section added, current standard completely replaced, or current standard deleted:

Type (two lines): Normal, no Heading, Centered, Arial, font size 12, bold, initial caps.

Section number: Heading 1, Centered, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Title: Heading 2, Centered, Arial, font size 16, bold, upper case.

Instructions: Normal, no Heading, Arial, font size 12, bold. These instructions indicate whether the section is being added, deleted and replaced, or deleted.

Part: Heading 3, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Article: Heading 4, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Example: See Appendix 2 for specification layout.

Partial section added, modified, or deleted:

Type (two lines): Normal, no Heading, Centered, Arial, font size 12, bold, initial caps.

Section number followed by an “M”: Heading 1, Centered, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case. No space between the section number and the “M.”

Example: 02056M

Title: Heading 2, Centered, Arial, font size 16, bold, upper case.

Instructions: Normal, no Heading, Arial, font size 12, bold. These instructions indicate which part of the section is being added, deleted, or modified.

The following are used, as needed depending on the extent of the modification. Do not use heading levels for the following areas within this type of specification. Several examples are given to illustrate the typical formatting. Formatting may vary depending on the extent of the modification.

Part: Normal, no Heading, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Article: Normal, no Heading, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Example: See Appendix 3 for specification layout.

Special Provisions

Formatting similar to both types of supplemental specifications except as follows:

Type: Normal, no Heading, Centered, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Project Number: Normal, no Heading, Centered, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

Section number (followed by an “M” or “S”): Heading 1, Centered, Arial, font size 12, bold, upper case.

The remainder of formatting is similar to supplemental specifications. Pay close attention to the “Instructions” formatting for both types of Supplemental Specifications. When writing an “S” Special Provision that replaces a current Standard the title of the Special Provision section must match exactly the title of the Standard being replaced.

Example: See Appendix 4 for specification layout.

Date Standard, Supplemental, or Special Provision:

Standard and Supplemental - In footer, positioned at line 3, right justified.

Special Provision - On line above "SPECIAL PROVISION" type text, right justified.

Example: See Appendices for specification layout.

Headers and Footers:

Headers: Not used in Standard Specifications, Supplemental Specifications, or Special Provisions.

Footer: Centered, Arial, font size 12, with page numbering set, use automatic code for the page number and a hard page number for the total number of document pages. Do not use automatic coding for the total number of pages as this does not allow proper page numbering when combining more than one Section. Do not add a blank line in front of any footer information. Do not use a graphics line in the footer.

Example: See Appendices for specification layout.

Tab Sets:

Set all tabs to half-inch increments unless other increments are required for a specific reason.

Other Examples and Files:

Refer to the Standards and Specifications Web site to the current specification year at <http://www.udot.utah.gov/go/standardsandspecifications> for master files that provide additional information for use in creating Standard Specifications, Supplemental Specifications, or Special Provisions.

Chapter 3 - Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Symbols

Definitions

Abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols are shortened forms of longer words, names, or expressions. Each differs from the others in formation and usage.

Abbreviations in the strictest sense are shortened forms of a single word or phrase, usually followed by a period and often including lower case letters.

Examples: Dr., etc., and chap. With the exception of a.m., p.m., and No. (for number), do not use abbreviations.

Acronyms are formed from the first letters of a string of words or an organizational name. The letters in acronyms can be read or pronounced separately or together as a single word. Do not use periods in acronyms.

Examples: PVC, IEEE, FHWA, WYDOT, and OSHA.

Symbols are freestanding signs, letters, or characters with unique agreed-on meanings. Symbols are not abbreviations and are not punctuated or treated as such. Use a space before and after a symbol. Symbols are not preceded by a hyphen or followed by a period unless at the end of a sentence.

Examples: lb (pound), ft (foot or feet), yd³ (cubic yard).

Rules for Acronyms and Abbreviations

Be consistent. The shortened forms used most often in UDOT Standard Specifications are listed in Section 00570, Definitions. Additional forms are listed in this Guide. For the proper form of abbreviations not listed in these sources, consult chapter 15, “Abbreviations,” of *The Chicago Manual* or chapters 9 and 10, “Abbreviations and Letter Symbols” and “Signs and Symbols,” in the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual*. Do not invent or use forms that vary from these sources. Refer to <http://www.udot.utah.gov/go/standardsreferences>.

Before introducing a shortened form not listed in Section 00570, Definitions, write out the complete name or meaning at the first usage, followed immediately with the shortened form in parentheses. When introducing a word-string of common nouns and adjectives set in lower-case letters that will later be used in a shortened form, maintain the lower-case letters in the full words and type the short form in capital letters.

Example: When horizontal elliptical reinforced concrete pipe (HERCP) is specified ... Install the HERCP so that ...

Do not introduce a shortened form that will not be reused in the same named and numbered Section of Standard Specifications. When a previously introduced short form is reused in a new named and numbered Section, write out the complete name or meaning at the first usage in the new Section, then follow with the short form in parentheses.

The list of acronyms shown below in Table 1 was updated at the time the 2008 Standard Specifications were printed. Writers who plan on frequent use of an acronym or other shortened form not in the table can contact the Standards and Specifications Section to suggest its inclusion. The Standards and Specifications Section will provide guidance on how to proceed with the recommend change to Section 00570.

Use the indefinite article “an” before acronyms and abbreviations that are pronounced as if they begin with a vowel. If the acronym or abbreviation begins as if it were pronounced with a consonant precede it with an “a.”

Examples: An AASHTO requirement, an SAE specification (because the letter s is pronounced es), a PSC document.

Form plural acronyms by adding the lowercase letter “s.” Do not use an apostrophe.

Examples: Multiple disadvantaged business enterprise are written DBEs, not DBE’s, and multiple variable message signs are VMSs, not VMS’s.

Table 1

Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in Standard Specifications	
Acronym or Short Form	Full Name or Meaning
AAN	American Association of Nurserymen
AAR	Association of American Railroads
AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACI	American Concrete Institute
AGC	Associated General Contractors
AI	Asphalt Institute
AIA	American Institute of Architects
AISC	American Institute of Steel Construction
AISI	American Iron and Steel Institute
AMRL	AASHTO Materials Reference Laboratory
ANLA	American Nursery and Landscape Association
ANSI	American National Standards Institute
API	American Petroleum Institute
APL	Accepted Products Listing
ARA	American Railway Association
AREA	American Railway Engineering Association
AREMA	American Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-Way Association
ASCE	American Society of Civil Engineers

Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in Standard Specifications	
ASLA	American Society of Landscape Architects
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
ATMS	Advanced Traffic Management System
AWPA	American Wood Preservers' Association
AWWA	American Water Works Association
AWS	American Welding Society
CRF	Code of Federal Regulations
CSI	Construction Specification Institute
EBS	UDOT's Electronic Bid System
EUSERC	Electric Utility Service Equipment Requirements Committee
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FSS	Federal Specifications and Standards
GSA	General Services Administration
IMSA	International Municipal Signal Association
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITE	Institute of Traffic Engineers
MIL	Military Specifications
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
NEC	National Electrical Code
NEMA	National Electrical Manufacturers Association
NVLAP	National Verification Laboratory Acceptance Program, (Bureau of Standards)
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PCA	Portland Cement Association
PDPL	Performance Data Products Listing
PTI	Post-Tensioning Institute
SAE	Society of Automotive Engineers
SSPC	Structural Steel Painting Council
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
UDOT	Utah Department of Transportation
UL	Underwriter's Laboratory
UPDES	Utah Pollution Discharge Elimination System
USAS	United States of American Standard Institute
USC	United States Code
WWPA	Western Wood Products Association

Style for Measurements in Standard Specifications

Measurements involve descriptions of quantities and are composed of a numeric value and a unit of measure. Use numbers for the numeric value of a measurement; use symbols to indicate the unit of measure. Do not use words or abbreviations for the number or units in a measurement. Exceptions are discussed in Chapter 4 of this Guide.

Measurement Symbols

Table 2

Measurement Symbols for Standard Specifications		
Inch-Pound Units (U.S. Customary System)		Kind of quantity or measurement
Symbol	Unit Name	
mil inch* ft yd mi	mil (0.001 inch) inch foot, feet yard mile	Length
in ² ft ² yd ² mi ² acre	square inch square foot, square feet square yard square mile Acre	Area
fl oz pt qt gal in ³ ft ³ yd ³	fluid ounce Pint Quart Gallon cubic inch cubic foot, cubic feet cubic yard	Volume
oz lb ton	ounce pound ton, short (2000 lb)	Mass (Weight)
degrees F**	degree Fahrenheit	Temperature
s min h d	second minute hour day	Time
mph	miles per hour	Speed
psi	pounds per square inch	Pressure
w kw a v va Ω hz J lm fc hp	watt kilowatt ampere volt voltampere ohm hertz joule lumen footcandle horsepower	Power, Energy, and Electrical
lbf kip	pound-force 1000 pounds-force	Force
Ku	Krebs unit	Viscosity, Dynamic
cst st	centistokes stokes	Viscosity, Kinematic
gpm	gallons per minute	Flow

- * Spell out inch. Do not abbreviate as in except as noted above for area and volume
- ** Spell out degrees F and degrees of an angle. Do not use the degree symbol except in tables (Refer to Table 3)

Symbols for units of U.S. Standard Units (Inch-Pound Units) appear in paragraph 9.62, “Standard Letter Symbols for Units of Measure,” the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual*. Refer to <http://www.udot.utah.gov/go/standardsreferences> and then under the Article Listing to the Specification Writers’ Guide for the link to this document.

To use measurement symbols properly:

1. Do not follow with a period unless the symbol is at the end of a sentence. Measurement symbols are not abbreviations.
2. Do not add an “s” to form a plural. The symbol remains the same whether the quantity is one or many.

Examples: 1 lb, 2 lb, 1 ft, 2 ft, 24 h; not 2 lbs, not 24 hrs.

3. Type a space between the quantity and the symbol.

Examples: 2 lb, 2 ft, 25 degrees F.

4. Precede only with numbers, never words.

Example: 2 ft; not two ft.

5. Do not use symbols without accompanying numbers.

Example: Measurement is by the cubic yard; not the yd³.

6. Do not mix symbols and names in the same expression.

Example: ft/s or feet per second; not feet/second or feet/s.

7. Print symbols and quantities in normal, normal type regardless of surrounding text. Do use italics.

Example: 2 ft, *not 2 ft*

8. Do not use unit abbreviations, short forms, or symbolic representations not shown in Table 2.

Examples: 2 ft, not 2’; 6 inch, not 6”

Mathematical and Other Symbols

Table 3

Mathematical and Other Symbols			
Symbol	Meaning	Use symbol in ...	
		Tables only	Text and tables
+	Plus		Y
-	Minus		Y
±	plus or minus		Y
=	equal to		Y
<	less than		Y
≤	less than or equal to		Y
>	greater than		Y
≥	greater than or equal to		Y
×	multiplied by; dimensional indicator		Y
/	Per		Y
%	Percent	Y	
°	degree temperature or angular measurement	Y	
Ω	ohm		Y
: (colon)	ratio; proportionality		Y
\$	U.S. dollar		Y
•	bullet		Y

When using mathematical and other signs and symbols:

1. Type a space before and after.

Example: 2 in × 2 in × 1 in.

Exceptions: no space precedes the angular degree symbol (180°) or temperature degree (5°F) and no space follows the minus sign when used in a temperature that is below zero degrees (-5 degrees F or -5°F).

2. In text, use words for those quantitative relationships indicated in Table 3.

Example: Fasten reinforcing bars securely except where the spacing is *less than* 1 ft.

Chapter 4 - Numbers vs. Words

General

Use numbers for measurements, sizes, and critical or precise quantities.

Examples:

Maintain a surface temperature of 70 degrees F for 72 hours

Gouges not more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch deep

Mark the weight on members heavier than 3 ton

Use numbers when cross-referencing sections, subsections, and other parts of Standard Specifications or similar sources.

Examples:

Use materials required by AASHTO section 5

Refer to this Section, article 2.1, paragraph A2

Use numbers for numerical values greater than ten.

Examples:

Fabricate from not more than two pieces of sheet steel.

Furnish six sets of drawings.

Allow two days to complete the testing.

Make payment within 30 days of completion.

Use words for numbers at the beginning of a sentence. If a number appears at the beginning of a sentence, reorder the sentence if possible.

Examples:

Thirty minutes before installation, begin preparing the material.

Prepare the material 30 minutes before installation.

When quantity and size are expressed together, use numbers for the size and words for the quantity.

Examples:

three ½-inch holes

twenty-two 50-pound weights

Be consistent. Within the same context, treat similarly all numbers that refer to the same category of things.

Examples:

Test from 5 to 15 seconds not test from five to 15 seconds.

Thirty minutes before starting, and again sixty (not 60) minutes later check the temperature.

Decimals

Express decimals in numbers, not words.

Example: 0.1, not one-tenth.

Never leave a decimal point without numerals on both sides.

Examples: 1.5, 6.125, 0.5, 0.125.

Time and Date

Use numbers for clock times. Keep zeros when describing times “on the hour.” Use the standard 12-hour system, with all numbers accompanied by the appropriate a.m. or p.m. designation (using lower-case letters, followed by periods). Leave a space between the number and abbreviation but no spaces inside the abbreviation.

Examples: 9:00 a.m., 10:30 p.m.

Exception: Use the words “noon” and “midnight” to indicate twelve o'clock. Do not use the number 12 followed by a word or abbreviation.

Example: Do not work from noon to midnight. (Not 12 noon or 12 p.m.; not 12 midnight or 12 a.m.)

Use words (written in full) for the names of months and numbers for days of the month and years. Do not use ordinal designators (e.g., th and rd) in dates.

Examples:

June 15, 2005

from May 1, to September 30.

Money

Use numbers for monetary amounts. Do not include the decimal and zeros for the cents when amounts are in whole dollars. Do not leave a space between the dollar sign (\$) and numeric value.

Example: Bill at the rate of \$1,500 per mix.

Fractions

Determine whether it is technically correct to use fractions or decimals. In most cases, use fractions when expressing inch-pound measures and sizes.

Examples:

Leave the cut end at least $\frac{1}{2}$ inch above the base

Drill to a depth of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch

However: Construct from aluminum alloy sheet at least 0.0051 inches thick.

Use numbers for mixed fractions. Do not leave a space between the whole number and simple fraction.

Examples:

Join the top to the bottom with an arc of not more than $87\frac{1}{2}$ degrees

Leave a distance of no more than $1\frac{3}{4}$ times the diameter of the bolt

Use fractions when forming a unit-modifier or compound adjective. Follow the fraction with a hyphen and use the full unit name.

Examples:

a $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch pipe

a $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile open space

Directions to Insert a Symbol

Some fractions automatically format properly. Use the AutoCorrect feature in MS Word to enter common fractions. From the Tools Menu select "AutoCorrect Options" then from the "AutoFormat" and "AutoFormat As You Type" tabs check the Fraction option. The fractions $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$, and $\frac{3}{4}$ are formatted from here.

Some fractions are also available in Word as symbols. From the Insert Menu select "Symbol." From the "Font" drop down box select "normal text" and then from the "Subset" box select "Number Forms." The fractions $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{1}{8}$, $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{5}{8}$, and $\frac{7}{8}$ are available.

Fractions other than those that are already set in Word can be created by first entering the fraction, 1/16 for example. Continue by highlighting the numerator, clicking "Font" from the Format Menu, and then selecting superscript. Next highlight the denominator and then continue as in the numerator, except choose "Subscript" from the options. The fraction would then look like $\frac{1}{16}$. If the fraction in the proper format is available in the same or another document copy and paste it to the correct location.

Use words for simple fractions that do not describe a measurement or a precise quantity, that stand alone, or that come before the words "of a" or "of an." Use a hyphen to connect the numerator and denominator.

Examples:

Add mulch when the tank is at least one-third full of water.

Use a spray bar three-fourths the length of the mixer or greater.

Use straw, hay, or sawdust to fill the lower one-fourth to one-third of the trench.

Percent

Use the word "percent" in text following a number.

Examples:

If the average density is less than 95 percent, but no one sample is less than 92 percent, divide the samples into two, five-sample lots.

Changes greater than 5 percent will ...

A minimum of 4 percent moisture ...

Provided the quantity does not exceed 0.1 percent of the total contract cost, or \$2,500, whichever is greater (not one-tenth of one percent).

Use the % symbol in tables.

Hyphens and Unit Modifiers

When a number and word (usually a unit name) work together to describe something else (usually an object or material, like a pipe, bolt, or board), they are acting as a single word, or adjective, called a unit modifier.

Use a hyphen between the number and word in unit modifiers. Do not use hyphens with unit symbols.

Examples:

Flame- or saw-cut two, 4½-foot long test samples of any size 400-grade bar.

Install a 400-watt, 120-volt, bar-type electric heating unit in all controller cabinets.

Construct the cabinet from 0.125-inch thick aluminum.

Commas vs. Spaces

Use commas in numbers of four digits or more.

Examples: \$1,000; \$10,000; 1,000 ft; 2,500 psi; 10,000 psi; 1,000 gal.

Use a combination of letters and numbers for very large round numbers.

Examples: Our budget exceeds \$16 million.

Chapter 5 - Punctuation

Serial Commas

In a series of three or more elements, separate the elements with a comma. Use a comma before the conjunction (“and” or “or”) joining the last two elements.

Examples:

Provide a minimum of eight individually selectable outputs, each selectable by time-of-day, day-of-week, and week-of-year.

Do not use mortar blocks, bricks, wood, or aluminum framework in supporting deck slab reinforcement.

Protect trees, shrubs, and other landscape features designated by the Engineer for preservation from abuse, marring, or damage during construction.

Closing Quotation Marks

Place periods and commas required by a sentence inside closing quotation marks, regardless of whether the period or comma is part of the quoted matter.

Examples:

Correct method: Lay the downstream end of each blanket on top, creating a “shingle effect.”

Incorrect method: Lay the downstream end of each blanket on top, creating a “shingle effect”.

The contact pressure is “the average ground contact pressure,” expressed in pounds per square inch.

Quotation Marks When Referencing Signs and Labels

When referring to specific words that appear elsewhere on signs, labels, drawings, etc., use quotation marks. Do not use all-capitals, bold typefaces, or similar typographic features for added emphasis.

Examples:

Mark each drawing “final.”

Mark submittals “approved,” “approved as corrected,” or “not approved.”

Mark the pull box covers “UDOT Traffic Signal” when the box contains traffic signal conductors.

Letters as Shapes

Do not use quotes around the letter. Link the letter and following word with a hyphen if warranted.

Examples:

U-shaped staples	Y-connector
an A-frame structure	U-bolts
I-connector	an S curve
O-ring	H-pile

To make letters used as shapes plural, add an “s” and no apostrophe.

Example: Vs, not V’s.

Parentheses

Use parentheses to insert and set off additional information relevant to the sentence. Do not use dashes for this purpose in Standard Specifications because of the possibility of confusion with the minus sign or similar marks or symbols.

Example: Nut rotation is relative to the bolt regardless of the element (nut or bolt) that is turned.

Parentheses are also used to insert and set off counterparts or equivalencies, such as chemical formulas.

Example: Conform to the requirement for chrome oxide (Cr₂O₃) green.

Place commas, semicolons, periods, or other punctuation that the main sentence might need after the closing parenthesis mark.

Chapter 6 - Capitalization

General

Be consistent within specifications. For situations not addressed in this Guide, consult chapter 8, “Names and Terms,” of *The Chicago Manual of Style* or chapter 3, “Capitalization Rules,” in the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual*. Refer to <http://www.udot.utah.gov/go/standardsreferences> and then under the Article Listing to the Specification Writers’ Guide for the links to these documents.

Avoid over-capitalization. Excessive capitalization slows reading and reduces the very emphasis capitalization is meant to achieve.

Specific

Capitalize the following words or categories of specific names and things:

ACRONYMS

Document titles

Examples:

the Engineer’s Weekly Report

Certificate of Compliance

Laws and legislative acts

Examples:

the Utah Seed Law

the Federal Seed Act

Clean Air Act

Utah Statute 11-14-101

Official titles

Examples:

the State Bridge Engineer

the Engineer

the Contractor

UDOT Program

Examples:

Construction Program

Highway Development Program

Materials Program

Traffic Program

Proper nouns

Titles of sections, subsections, tables, and figures in Standard Specifications;

Examples:

A bid guarantee that is not submitted in accordance with this Section, article 1.10.

Sign and deliver the guaranty to the Engineer before acceptance of the Contract in accordance with Section 00570.

Refer to this Section, article 1.6.

Do not capitalize:

bidder

commission (when referring to the Utah Transportation Commission)

fabricator

plans

subcontractor

work (even when referring to the defined term)

Chapter 7 - Lists

General

Lists may be used at any level within a specification.

Punctuation

UDOT does not use punctuation in lists of specifications, references, or general items.

Example 1:

1.2 RELATED SECTIONS

- A. Section 01455: Material Quality Requirements
- B. Section 01741: Final Cleanup
- C. Section 02455: Driven Piles
- D. Section 02912: Topsoil

Example 2:

1.3 REFERENCES

- A. AASHTO M 145: Classification of Soils and Soil-Aggregate Mixtures for Highway Construction Purposes
- B. AASHTO T 27: Sieve Analysis of Fine and Coarse Aggregates

Example 3:

- B. Use a rangeland type drill for non-turf areas or a Brillion type drill for turf areas equipped with the following:
 - 1. Depth band
 - 2. Seed box agitator
 - 3. Seed metering device
 - 4. Furrow opener
 - 5. Packer wheels or drag chains

Use a period at the end of a numbered list in which the list items are complete sentences.

Example:

- D. Prepare Turf Sod Surface:
 - 1. Review finish grade to confirm that topsoil is 1-½ inch below the top of all walks, curbs, mow strips and other hard surfaces.
 - 2. Apply fertilizer at the rate of 2 lb/100 yd² and mix thoroughly into upper 2 inches of topsoil.
 - 3. Level and roll seeded areas using a 21 gal water-filled hand roller containing 8 to 10 gal of water.
 - 4. Just before laying the sod, lightly rake and dampen with water the top ¼ to ⅝ inches of soil.

Use a period at the end of a numbered list items when the list includes long items that contain a complete sentence. When this applies to one item in the list, end all items in the list with a period.

Example:

- B. Concrete:
 - 1. Refer to Section 03055.
 - 2. Furnish the Engineer with mix design, trial batch gradation, and 28-day compressive strength test results from the trial batches before placing concrete.
 - 3. Use the same materials and admixtures intended for production in the trial batches.
 - 4. Do not place pavement before obtaining written approval of the mix design.
 - 5. Meet the approved trial batch proportions. Changes in the mix proportions require new trial batches.

End the items in a numbered list with a period when the listed items contain a bolded introductory element, usually followed by a colon.

Example:

- A. **Seasonal:** Do not pave from October 15 to April 15. Submit cold weather concrete plan to the Engineer for written approval to pave outside these limits.
- B. **Hot Weather and Cold Weather:** Refer to Section 03055.
- C. **Night Operations:** Provide proper lighting from one-half hour after sunset to one-half hour before sunrise following Section 00555.

Structure

Use parallel structure when creating lists by beginning each item in a list with the same part of speech—noun, verb, adjective, etc.

Example: Each numbered item begins with a verb:

- A. Place the mixed material with a self-propelled asphalt paver.
- B. Adjust emulsion content as pavement conditions change. Repair reclaimed materials when surface ruts or ravels before placement of final wearing surface.
- C. Use watering device to prevent materials from adhering to the tires for breakdown or intermediate rolling.
- D. Add water to milled material as necessary to facilitate uniform mixing.
- E. Continue breakdown rolling until no displacement is noted.
- F. Use steel wheel rollers in static or vibratory mode as required for final rolling.
- G. Wait 72 hours after a rain or confirm that moisture content is less than 1.5 percent before placing flush, tack, or final surfacing on cold recycled material.

Example: Each numbered item begins with a preposition:

- A. During suspensions, at no additional cost to the Department, store materials and equipment:
 - 1. Outside the clear zone.
 - 2. As far from the travel way as possible.
 - 3. At a location that will not cause maintenance or safety problems for the roadway.

Chapter 8 - Tables, Figures, and Forms

General

Keep tables and figures as simple as possible, both in layout and content. Display information so it can be grasped quickly and without confusion. For additional guidance on the format and design of tables, consult chapter 13, “Tables,” of *The Chicago Manual of Style* and chapter 13, “Tabular Work,” in the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual*. Refer to <http://www.udot.utah.gov/go/standardsreferences> and then under the Article Listing to the Specification Writers’ Guide for the links to these documents.

Tables

Number all tables with the “Table” and the number. Begin renumbering with each new section. Do not use the Section number in the table number.

Example: Table 1, Table 2, not Table 03055-1 or Table 3-1.

Provide a title for every table. Capitalize the first letter only of all significant words. Do not place a period at the end of the title.

Center the table, table number, and title horizontally on the page. Place the table number above the start of the table and title in the first row of the table, both in bold-faced, 12-point Arial font.

Use either 10- or 12-point Arial font for table text. Bold column headers.

Use grid lines on tables for all cells unless doing so would confuse the user. Use a normal single weight line for all lines.

Examples:

Table 4 Price Reductions for Deficient Thickness over Existing Surfaces	
Deviations Below Profile (in feet)	Pay Factor
0.0 to 0.02	1.00
0.02 to 0.04	.90
0.04 to 0.06	.60

Table 5

Physical Properties of Joint Sealer (Structures) and Test Methods		
Modulus of Elasticity at 100 percent Elongation	132 psi	ASTM D 412
Hardness (Shore A)	40 ± 5	
Elongation (at break)	700 percent	ASTM D 412
Recovery	Greater than 90 percent	
Tensile Strength	190 psi	ASTM D 412
Adhesive in Peel	20 lbs/inch	TT-S00230 C Type II, Class A
Service Range	-40 degree F to 150 degree F	TT-S-00230 C
Initial Cure, Tack Free (Depending on Temperature and Humidity)	6 to 8 hours	
Final Cure	5 to 8 days	
Staining Characteristics	Nonstaining	
Color	Gray	

Refer to tables by number.

Examples:

See Table 1.

Refer to Table 2.

Forms

Show the full form title when referring to a specific form. Place quotation marks around the title of the form followed by the word “form.” Include the appropriate form number in parentheses as applicable.

The word “Form” and the number may be used alone only upon additional reference within the same section as the initial full form title and form number.

Example:

Complete and submit the “Pile and Driving Equipment Data” form located at the end of this Section.

Complete the “Inspector’s Daily Report” form (C111) as required.

Complete Form C111 as required. This example applies when used in the same section as the above example.

Chapter 9 - Wording of Specifications

General

Use the simplest language that says clearly and accurately what needs to be said. Write as if you were speaking or giving directions aloud. Avoid jargon, contorted wording, and pseudo-legalisms. Use terms with legal meanings only when absolutely necessary.

Active Voice

Voice is a property of verbs that indicates whether the subject of the sentence acts or is acted upon—either active or passive. In the active voice, the subject is the doer of the act and the verb makes clear within the sentence who is doing what. The active voice leaves no doubt who is responsible for the action described. Keep sentences as simple as possible by using one-word verbs.

Example:

The Department specifies the dimensions.

The Department did the deed, and the verb “specifies” says in one word what the Department did. Occasionally the verb in the active voice requires a helping verb to complete the action or intention.

Example:

The Engineer may test individual load consistency.

In this case, using the one-word verb “test” would not completely convey the intended meaning of the sentence. “May” here indicates that it is at the Engineer’s discretion if the loads will be tested. Remember, this sentence is still in the active voice because the doer of the action is conducting the action and appears in the sentence.

Sentences in the passive voice need not say anything about the doer of the action. Responsibility does not have to be assigned. Verbs in the passive voice always need help and even at their simplest, they always must be accompanied by a form of the verb to be that includes for example is, was, and will be.

Example:

The concrete was placed.

The contractor may have placed the concrete but we do not know because the sentence does not say. The passive verb must be helped by *was*. These are the traits of a sentence in the passive voice: the verb is packaged in a phrase with a form of *to be* and the doer of the action does not have to be identified. If the doer is identified, the identification comes after the verb in a phrase that begins with *by*. For example: The concrete was placed by the contractor. The active and passive voice each have their uses. The active voice is best used when it is important to identify the party responsible for the action in a sentence.

Example:

Weigh masters will determine tonnage.

The passive voice is used when the receiver is more important than the doer. Passive sentences can be used when you do not know or do not want to mention the doer.

Examples:

Tonnage will be determined.

The failure occurred because metal shavings were dropped into the gear housing.

Use the active voice rather than the passive as a general rule for writing Standard Specifications except as noted elsewhere in this Guide.

Mood

Mood is a property of verbs that conveys the writer's or speaker's belief about the truth or nature of the sentence—whether it is meant to be a command, a fact, or conjecture. There are three verb moods in English: imperative, indicative, and subjunctive.

Imperative

The imperative mood is used to give a command or instruction. A distinctive feature of statements in the imperative mood is that they leave out the subject of the sentence. The subject is understood but never stated.

Write UDOT specifications or drawings to the contractor, whether a standard specification or drawing, supplemental specification or drawing, special provision, or plan sheet. The specifications and drawings define the Contractor's responsibility in meeting each specification or drawing, spell out the Department's expectations, and explain what the Contractor is expected to provide. Unless otherwise noted, all actions are to be performed by the Contractor.

Example:

Order the concrete.

This sentence is **written in both the active voice and the imperative mood**. Because the Standard Specifications and Drawings already makes clear who the direction is addressed to, the party responsible for carrying out the directive—the Contractor—does not need to be stated. The complete sentence is understood to be:

[Contractor,] order the concrete.

Indicative

The second type of verb mood is the indicative, used to indicate statements of fact and description. The indicative mood is used frequently in the Standard Specifications and Drawings. In the following example, the statement is intended as a simple description of what is or is meant to be, and the verb will establish it in the indicative. Because most verbs have voice and mood at the same time, the sentence is in both the indicative mood and the active voice.

Example:

The Engineer will establish right-of-way and construction lines.

Subjunctive

The final mood type is the subjunctive mood. Because it is used to convey doubt or conjecture or to pose a “what if” situation, the subjunctive mood is rarely used in the Standard Specifications or Drawings.

Example:

If slotted or oversized holes are specified, the Contractor will use hardened flat washers.

Benefits of the Active Voice and Imperative Mood In Standard Specifications

Among the writing tools best suited to bringing such enhanced clarity to Standard Specifications is an increased use of both the active voice and the imperative mood.

Active voice forces a writer to identify within a sentence who is responsible for what.

Example of Passive Voice:

If invoices for transportation charges are not furnished, payment will be delayed until the invoices are submitted.

Example of Active Voice:

The Department will withhold payment for transportation charges until the contractor submits the invoices.

Not only does the second sentence have 18 percent fewer words than the first but it also adds two pieces of information: who is responsible for the delay in payment (the Department) and who is responsible for submitting the invoices (the contractor). Used well, the active voice adds clarity, fixes responsibility, and improves readability by simplifying sentence structures and eliminating words.

The imperative mood offers similar benefits. It is the most efficient way to give a command, direction, or instruction. The imperative allows brevity because the person to whom the instruction is addressed is understood grammatically to be included in the sentence but is left out of the wording.

Unless otherwise indicated, such statements in Standard Specifications are directed to the bidder or the contractor. Increased use of the imperative gives specification writers a tool to make this direction more efficient.

Chapter 10 - Other Wording and Usage

General

Choose the wording that says most clearly and efficiently what needs to be said. Say no more than that, but say exactly that.

Needless Words and Jargon

Many words serve only as filler. Their use adds clutter and can hinder a reader's ability to grasp what is important. Omit words that do not add meaning. Favor a single word over a phrase. Avoid jargon.

Table 6
Alternatives to Common Wordy Phrases

Instead of ...	Use or Consider ...
a minimum of	at least
absolutely essential	essential
ambient, atmospheric	air
as may be necessary	as necessary
at a later date	later
commence	begin (or start)
cost thereof	cost of
dispose of at a contractor-	becomes the Contractor's
furnished site	property
enclosed herewith	enclosed
fails to	does not
give due and sufficient written	give written notice
notice	
impracticable	Impractical
in order to	to
in lieu of	instead of
in the event of	if
in advance of	before
job site	project
pertinent	appropriate
practicable	practical
prior to	before
through the use of	by
until such time as	until
utilize	use
worksite	project

Usage of Specific Words or Phrases

And/Or – This construction is awkward and confusing.

Example:

red, blue, or both; not red and/or blue

Fabrication includes other inserts, sleeves, or both”; not “Fabrication includes other inserts and/or sleeves.”

As specified in – Use instead of “as described in,” “as designated in,” “as indicated in,” “pursuant to,” or similar phrases that reference provisions of a specification.

At no additional cost to the Department – Use instead of “at the contractor’s expense.”

Conform, Conforming, and Conformance – Use “accordance” or “in accordance with” instead of “conformance.”

Example:

Provide magnesium sulfate in accordance with AASHTO T 104.

Ensure vs. Insure vs. Assure – These are three different verbs with three different meanings. Use “insure” only when speaking of the sort of financial protection offered by insurance companies. “Assure” is only used when giving reassurance to another person, as in “Let me assure you that . . .” UDOT does not use “ensure” or “assure” in specification or drawing writing.

In the contract – Use instead of “in the specifications” or “on the plans.”

Incidental – Use instead of “subsidiary.”

Example:

Finishing local material source sites, including seeding and mulching, is not measured or paid for separately and is considered incidental to other items of work.

May – Use as appropriate instead of “exercise its option to,” “reserve the right to,” or similar phrases that describe a party’s prerogatives.

Shall – The use of the imperative mood eliminates the need for “shall.” Use “will” to indicate something the Department will execute.

Quantity vs. Amount – Use “quantity” for materials. Use “amount” for money.

That vs. Which. “That” and “which” are often used as if they are interchangeable. “That” is properly used to introduce information or a phrase that is essential to the meaning of a sentence. “Which” introduces information that is not essential to the meaning of a sentence.

Hyphenation, Word Separation, and Standard Phrasing

English changes over time and words that are commonly used together tend to migrate, first staying paired but separate, then finding frequent use with a linking hyphen, then joining eventually into a single word.

It can be hard to know where in this progression a word pair or phrase may be. Some common combinations are shown below in the form used in Standard Specifications. For further guidance, chapter 7, “Spelling, Distinctive Treatment of Words, and Compounds,” in *The Chicago Manual of Style* or chapters 6 and 7, “Compounding Rules” and “Compounding Examples,” in the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual*. Refer to <http://www.udot.utah.gov/go/standardsreferences> and then under the Article Listing to the Specification Writers’ Guide for the links to these documents.

Table 7
Hyphenated Words, Compound Words, Word Separation, and
Standard Phrasing for use in Standard Specifications

Instead of ...	Use ...
&	and
air entraining	air-entraining
attaining	obtaining
center line	centerline
cross section	cross-section
earth moving or earthmoving	earth-moving
edge line	edgeline
guard rail	guardrail
high-early-strength	high early strength
pre-construction	preconstruction
right of way	right-of-way
steel wheel	steel-wheel
straight edge (the tool)	straightedge
sub-base	subbase
water reducing	water-reducing
work force	workforce

Cross-References

Refer to sections or articles of Standard Specifications by number. UDOT does not refer to sections by number and title except in the “Related Sections” article. Capitalize the word “Section” when making such a reference.

Examples:

Use Pozzolans conforming to Section 03055 and specification ASTM C 618.

Use water reducers or plasticizers per Section 03055.

Do not state per Section 03055, Portland Cement Concrete

UDOT does not refer to a specific article or paragraph in a cross-reference to another section, only within the same section.

Examples:

Refer to this Section, article 1.6. (Use this type of cross-reference because it refers to the section in question.)

Refer to Section 00515, article 1.6. (Do not use this type of cross-reference because it refers to another section.) The correct cross-reference is: Refer to Section 00515.

Chapter 11 - Specification Writer's Checklist

Use this checklist to verify that the common problems in specification writing are addressed and corrected as well as to verify the accuracy of the general content of each specification. Chapter numbers pertaining to the specific portions of this Guide are provided in parentheses when appropriate.

Table 8
Specifications Writer's Checklist

_____	Check accuracy of content.
_____	Determine that the text is complete and presented in a logical order. Make sure no portions of text were inadvertently dropped in preparation of the document.
_____	Check for proper date and document format (Chapter 2). For project specific Special Provisions, if using a previously used copy, update the date so it is current for the project. Do not change the date of a Department Special Provision unless the content of that particular Special Provision is modified. Modification of a Department Special Provision is permissible for a project but notification must be given to the owner of that section, i.e., the Materials Engineer. This notification allows the Department to update Department Special Provisions so that repeated changes on future projects are minimized. Refer to the "Instructions" area under both types of Supplemental Specifications (Chapter 2) and in the examples (Appendix 2 and 3) for text to add between the Section Title and Part 1 for Supplemental Specifications and Special Provision.
_____	DO NOT modify an approved Supplemental Specification in any manner if that Supplemental Specification is being put in a project. This includes changing the date, adding a project number, or removing the text "Supplemental Specification" from the top of the specification. Change Supplemental Specification ONLY if the intension is to submit the change to the Standards Committee through the coordination process.
_____	Check that the title of an "S" Special Provision that replaces a Standard matches the Standard. A Special Provision can not change the title of a Standard. A new Section number must be selected in accordance with currently established procedures if a new title is required.
_____	Check that the proper "M" or "S" designation for a Special Provision is used when numbering a section and in cross-references.
_____	Check that the "END OF SECTION" text is used properly. Do not use on "M" Supplemental Specifications or "M" Special Provisions (Appendices).

- _____ Check that all reference citations are exactly correct. Verify references to numbers and titles of sections, subsections, forms, and figures from Standard Specifications are correct and are correctly capitalized and punctuated (Chapters 2 and 6).
- _____ Check that notes are accurate and are numbered correctly in the text.
- _____ Check that all Parts, Articles, and Paragraphs are formatted properly (Chapter 2).
- _____ Check that all Related Sections and References articles are cross-referenced properly within the body of the specification (Chapter 10 and Appendix 1).
- _____ When creating a modification using an “M” Supplemental Specification or “M” Special Provision check all Related Section and Reference changes. Check that the Related Sections and References articles are still cross-referenced properly within the body of the specification if a Related Section or Reference is removed or added by the modification. If not, add or remove the appropriate article in the modification (Chapter 10 and Appendix 1).
- _____ Check that the footer is formatted correctly (Chapter 2).
- _____ Use accurate and current abbreviations and acronyms when appropriate (Chapter 3). Spell out acronyms when first used.
- _____ Use correct symbols for measurement (Chapter 3).
- _____ Use correct symbols for bid and pay units (Chapter 3).
- _____ Use correct mathematical signs and symbols (Chapter 3).
- _____ Check proper use of periods. Do not use a period after a symbol, except at the end of a sentence (Chapter 3).
- _____ Punctuate lists consistently (Chapter 5).
- _____ Avoid overcapitalization (Chapter 6). For example use “Engineer” and “Contractor” not “ENGINEER” and “CONTRACTOR.”
- _____ Format tables consistently. Check that all tables have titles and are numbered correctly and that all entries in tables are correct and located in proper rows and columns, under correct headings, and placed in the correct position in the text (Chapter 8).

- _____ Check text descriptions of tables against information in the tables.
- _____ Check that equations and formulas are complete and accurate and placed in the correct position in the text.
- _____ Phrase sentences in the active voice by stating the action and imperative mood by giving direction or instruction to the contractor (Chapter 9).
- _____ Avoid unnecessary words and jargon (Chapter 10).
- _____ Use italicized font for non-UDOT published documents.
- _____ Use MS Word's spell check feature to check for spelling errors.
- _____ Double-check accuracy of content.
- _____ Proofread the document. Have another person do this as well. Carefully proofread all electronic changes because you may either leave in a word from the older version or take out too many words.
- _____ Consider whether the Special Provision you wrote may become a Standard and contact the Standards and Specifications group for a specification number if it will or you think it might.
- _____ Complete any other review of your document that you think will make it a better specification from a technical and formatting standpoint.

Appendices

- 1 Format for Standard Specifications.
- 2 Supplemental Specification (New section added, current standard completely replaced, or current standard deleted).
- 3 Supplemental Specification (Partial section added, modified, or deleted).
- 4 Special Provisions (All types).

Appendix 1: Format for Standard Specifications

SECTION 00000

TITLE HERE

PART 1 GENERAL

1.1 SECTION INCLUDES

A.

B.

Or for “Not Used” option the following 1.1 alternate applies.

1.1 SECTION INCLUDES Not Used

Note: “Not Used” option applies if one of following designated Articles does not apply for the Section. Include the designated articles SECTION INCLUDES, RELATED SECTIONS, REFERENCES, DEFINITIONS, AND SUBMITTALS in all Sections in Standard Specifications, Supplemental Specification, and Special Provisions.

1.2 RELATED SECTIONS

A. Section 00000: Title here

B. Repeat for each specification referenced in the body of this section listing in numerical order by Section number

or

“Not Used” option

1.3 REFERENCES

A. AASHTO M 288: Geotextile Specification for Highway Applications

B. ASTM A 252: Welded and Seamless Steel Pipe Piles

C. Repeat for each item referenced in the body of this section

- D. List all AASHTO references first, followed by ASTM references, and finally all others as applicable. List each document or reference only once even if a document is listed several times in the body of the section, each referring to a different chapter or section. For AASHTO and ASTM references just list the main subject part of the title. Do not include the “Standard...for” or similar text.

or

“Not Used” option

1.4 DEFINITIONS

- A. List alphabetically as needed.
- B. Repeat for each required definition.

or

“Not Used” option

1.5 SUBMITTALS

- A. List as needed.
- B. Repeat for each required submittal or to expand as needed.

or

“Not Used” Option

1.6 TITLE AS APPLICABLE (Enter title for remaining articles as required and paragraphs as needed.)

PART 2 PRODUCTS

2.1 TITLE AS APPLICABLE

- A.
- B.

2.2 TITLE AS APPLICABLE (Continue as needed)

- A.

B.

PART 3 EXECUTION

3.1 TITLE AS APPLICABLE

A.

B.

3.2 TITLE AS APPLICABLE (Continue as needed)

A.

B.

END OF SECTION

The following is the footer information for a Standard Specification.

Title
00000 - Page x of y

Date goes here

Appendix 2: Supplemental Specification (New section added, current standard completely replaced, or current standard deleted.)

**Supplemental Specification
2005 Standard Specification Book**

SECTION 00000

TITLE HERE

NOTE: Enter instructions on what actions to take with respect to this Supplemental Specification. Three examples follow:

Delete Section 00000 and replace with the following:

Or

Add Section 00000

Or

Delete Section 00000 in its entirety. (For this type no other text follows this line.)

PART 1 GENERAL

1.1 SECTION INCLUDES

Refer to Appendix 1 for additional formatting for all Parts (1 - 3).

The following is the footer information for this type of supplemental specification.

Title
00000 - Page x of y

Date goes here

Appendix 3: Supplemental Specification (Partial section added, modified, or deleted)

This example is not all inclusive, but gives a general idea of the format.

Supplemental Specification 2005 Standard Specification Book

SECTION 00000M

TITLE HERE

NOTE: Enter instructions on what actions to take with respect to this Supplemental Specification. Each set of instructions are independent of each other. Four examples follow:

Add the following to Part 1, Article 1.1:

- D. Section 01315: Public Information

Delete Article 1.14, paragraph E and replace with the following:

- E. From the total value of work, the Department deducts and retains five percent until after the entire Contract has been completed in an acceptable manner, with the following exceptions:

Delete article 2.2 and replace with the following:

List information here

Delete article 3.3:

The following is the footer information for of supplemental specification.

Title
00000M - Page x of y

Date goes here

Appendix 4: Special Provisions

Formatting similar to both types of supplemental specifications except as follows:

Date goes here for special provisions (this is not in a header)

SPECIAL PROVISION

PROJECT #

SECTION 00000S or 00000M

TITLE HERE

Formatting from this point for special provisions is similar to a supplemental specification except for the footer. Refer to the NOTE in either Appendix 2 or 3, depending on the type of Special Provision (S or M) being formatted.

The following is the footer information for of special provisions. Select the appropriate one.

Title

00000M - Page x of y

or

Title

00000S - Page x of y